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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2433
INFO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0956
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA/DSCA//
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001396

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/05/2017

TAGS: PREL PGOV MARR MOPS TU IZ

SUBJECT: TURKEY COMPLAINS ABOUT US C-130 CHAFF/FLARE
RELEASE OVER TURKISH TERRITORY

REF: ANKARA 1291

Classified By: Political-Military Counselor Carl Siebentritt,
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) We received a diplomatic note from the Foreign Ministry on June 4 registering a complaint that on May 20 a US C-130 transiting Turkish airspace en route from Iraq to Romania released chaff and flares just over the Iraqi border in Cizre, Turkey, and requesting the Embassy urge relevant USG authorities to take all necessary measures to avoid a recurrence. This note followed a similar complaint from the Turkish General Staff (TGS) to the Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC).

¶2. (SBU) After investigating the incident, ODC notified TGS and we advised the MFA that it was determined that the air crew had violated US Air Force policy and procedures. They were counseled together with other air crews on the appropriate use of flares in an effort to prevent future occurrences.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: The May 20 incident was followed by the May 24 accidental overflight of Turkish airspace by US F-16s. Both incidents took place just over the Turkish border from Iraq in Sirnak province, an area of intensive military operations against the PKK terrorist organization. Given almost daily PKK terrorist attacks in Turkey and Turkish government and public frustration both at the lack of perceived concrete US action to halt the terrorist threat to Turkey emanating from northern Iraq and at US disapproval of unilateral Turkish action in Iraq, suspicions of US activity in the border region are very high. As stated in reftel, we urge the utmost caution to avoid unintended incidents that could be misinterpreted. END COMMENT.

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